I have been at the Mississippi Poultry Association as your president for five years. Thank you for that opportunity. Reaching such a milestone causes me to stop and think about what we have accomplished by working together since September 2008. I am proud of what MPA has been able to do at the Capitol and around the state thanks to your involvement and your hardworking staff of Becky Beard and Bill Rosenblatt.

We have been active in electing legislators who will listen when we bring ideas to them, who understand business issues and in electing balanced and fair judges on the Court of Appeals and the Mississippi Supreme Court.

Through your involvement and working with other groups we have been successful in making Mississippi a more favorable place to do business by:

- Reforming the Workers Compensation laws for the first time in 20 years.
- Removing the sales tax on electricity, propane and natural gas for plants and for farms. This takes effect July 1, 2014.
- Lowering the sales tax on farm equipment and parts and labor for repairs to farm implements to 1.5%. This includes poultry house equipment and parts.
- Doubling the amount farmers can borrow from the Emerging Crops Loan Program.
- Passing legislation to prevent local governments from imposing bans on food items so preventing a patchwork of local menu requirements.
- Working to maintain and increase funding for MSU divisions important to poultry.

MPA is doing more to reach out to wider audiences to explain the impact of the farms, feed mills, hatcheries, processing plants and other components of this industry that directly and indirectly employ 55,000 people and the industry’s impact on Mississipians by:

- Producing a video on the growth and impact of the industry that MPA staff are always ready to present at a civic club or other venue.
- Contributing annually to the Farm Families of Mississippi advertising program to promote Mississippi agriculture using the positive image the public has of farmers. There have been television commercials featuring two poultry farmers.
- Advertising in the Mississippi Agriculture Magazine which features a poultry farmer in one article. The second edition of the magazine will be available in January.
- Helping sponsor the ProStart Competition, a cooking contest for high school culinary students. Chicken is on the menu for these student chefs.
- Scheduling frequent farm and plant tours for legislators, Congressional staff, state and federal agency officials.
- Making an annual donation of poultry and eggs to the governor for a charity of his choice at the start of the holiday giving season. The donation last year equaled 270,000 servings of protein.

We are more involved in education within the industry as well by:
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• Making more than three times the scholarships to growers’ children and grandchildren and students going into poultry industry. The awards have more than tripled in annual award amount as the foundation is nearing a $100,000 balance. First Financial Bank and International Paper are giving scholarships through the Mississippi Poultry Foundation.

• Supporting the Mississippi Poultry Chain competition for 4-H students that interests more students in poultry production.

• Offering more educational opportunities by focusing seminars on the immediate needs growers and company personnel have identified through surveys.

We remain active in working with state and federal agencies to make sure that the interests of the poultry industry are represented and protected. These include the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Revenue, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Agriculture and Commerce, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and others.

We have forged positive working relationships with other groups on areas of common interest such as the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, the Mississippi Manufacturers Association and the Mississippi Restaurant Association, among many others.

I was told five years ago the poultry industry in Mississippi is like a big family, and I have found it is true. Thanks for welcoming me into the family. I look forward to continuing to contribute to an even better five years going forward.
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Dr. Morgan Farnell grew up on a cattle farm in Redwater, Texas, and Hope, Arkansas. He received a B.S. in Agri-Business at Southern Arkansas University and went to work for Tyson Foods as a debone supervisor in Idabel, Oklahoma. While working for Tyson Foods, he decided to pursue a M.S. in Poultry Science with an emphasis in Pre-Harvest Food Safety at Texas A&M. He had all the intentions of going back to work for the poultry industry but met his future wife in the Animal Science Department and decided to get a Ph.D. in Veterinary Microbiology with an emphasis in improving the chicken’s ability to fight diseases. He has worked as a post-doctoral student for the Institute of Animal Health in Compton, England and for the USDA-Agricultural Research Service in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Before joining Mississippi State’s Poultry Science department, he worked with Texas A&M as a Poultry Extension Specialist for 7½ years. Due to the size and need of the industry and the limited number of people that were in his unit, Dr. Farnell branched out into several areas including emergency management, depopulation strategies, biosecurity, waste management, antibiotic alternatives, nutrition studies, shelter belts, composting, and etc.

“I have always enjoyed working with production agriculture and am very excited to have this new opportunity to come and work in Mississippi.”

Welcome to Mississippi, Dr. Farnell, we look forward to your extension and research efforts benefitting Mississippi’s poultry industry.

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Dr. Morgan Farnell

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Danny Thornton and Cindy Tucker are the newly-elected chair and vice chair, respectively, of the Mississippi Poultry Association Grower Advisory Committee.

Danny is a pullet grower for Peco in Leake County. He has been involved in the poultry industry since he was a child. He helped his father, a broiler farmer and service tech, throughout his childhood. Danny has worked in the industry for over 38 years. He started his career working for the Mississippi Board of Animal Health for 34 years. With the knowledge he acquired from the Board of Animal Health, Danny decided to take a teaching and extension position at Mississippi State. He enjoyed teaching and travelling the state providing assistance and educational resources to help meet the growing needs of poultry producers in Mississippi. Currently, Danny manages his pullet farm and administers animal welfare audits across the country for integrators. “I am excited to work with the Grower Advisory Committee in my new capacity. I look forward to working together with the Committee, fellow growers, and integrators,” he said.

Cindy is an 18-year broiler grower for Peco in Smith County. She decided to become a poultry producer after listening to and observing her neighbors who raised poultry. Cindy was taught self-discipline and strong work ethics from her parents. She is thankful for the support from her family, friends, fellow growers, Mississippi State, MPA, and Peco. “The resources and support they have and continue to provide have been invaluable,” she said.

The Grower Advisory Committee is made up of pullet, breeder, and broiler growers from Marshall Durbin, Peco, Sanderson Farms, Tyson, and Wayne Farms. The committee meets quarterly to address and discuss relevant concerns, plan grower seminars, and provide direction to policy positions that benefits our state’s number one agricultural commodity.
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On August 6 in Pearl and August 7 in Collins, the Mississippi Poultry Association Education and Research Committee hosted the Live Production Interest Group Meeting. The program was designed to further enhance the knowledge of hatchery, breeder and pullet managers, and service techs. The combined meetings drew nearly 100 attendees from Peco, Marshall Durbin, Sanderson Farms, Tyson, and Wayne Farms. Representatives from Aviagen, Cobb-Vantress, Hubbard, and professors from Mississippi State University’s Poultry Science Department presented.

The presentations covered Managing Pullets for Enhanced Uniformity and Livability (Tommy Walker, Cobb-Vantress), Preparing Pullets for Production (Randall Vickery, Aviagen), Hen Management for Optimum Productivity (Charles Swain, Cobb-Vantress), Understanding Rooster Fertility and the Causes of Infertility (Dr. Chris McDaniel, MSU), Male Management (Sean Holcombe, Hubbard), Life of Male Fertility (Gary Hogue, Aviagen), Eggshell - Embryo Relationship: Key to Broiler Hatching Success (Dr. David Peebles, MSU), and Hatchery Management: Focus on Chick Quality (Scott Martin, Cobb-Vantress).

MPA’s Education and Research Committee would like to thank our speakers who provided insight and knowledge. A special thanks goes to our sponsors, Aviagen, Cobb-Vantress, and Hubbard.

The committee surveyed members to determine issues of concern they needed training on to improve performance.
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Mississippi State President Mark E. Keenum and Jones County Junior College President Jesse Smith announced Friday [Aug. 2] that JCJC students transferring to MSU's poultry science program can expect a smoother transition thanks to a new two-plus-two agreement.

The agreement goes into effect this fall and allows specific courses in JCJC’s curricula to transfer to MSU’s poultry science program. It is one of numerous two-plus-two curriculum agreements MSU has with Mississippi community colleges.

“This collaboration between our university and JCJC is a win-win for both institutions and for the state of Mississippi as we prepare well qualified professionals to work in a field that is of tremendous importance to our economy,” Keenum said.

Designed to aid in a seamless transition from community colleges to MSU, two-plus-two programs place students on the road to a bachelor’s degree while completing their first two years of a course of study at a community college. Because of the new agreement, students interested in a poultry science degree can complete their freshman and sophomore years at JCJC without the worry that some classes might not transfer when they enroll at MSU.

“We wanted to make it easier for all those involved,” said Mary Beck, poultry science professor and department head. “These changes mean less cost and less time at college for the students.”

MSU’s poultry science department is one of only six across the nation. The program offers four degree tracks: production systems, business management, processed products and pre-veterinary medicine.

As Mississippi’s premier agricultural industry, poultry generates $2.47 billion each year and represents 33 percent of the state’s total farm-gate value.

Students heading straight into a career in the industry can expect 100 percent job placement, Beck said. “We could place double the number of students,” she said. The department hopes to make similar agreements with other community colleges.
A STABLE ENVIRONMENT IS IMPORTANT

Growers must maintain a stable house environment in order to achieve optimal bird performance. Genetic changes/improvements over the past few decades have increased the importance of constant in-house environmental management for today's broiler. Consequently, if ventilation and temperature are not ideal for any part of a day, the potential growth for that part of the day is lost and can never be regained (Blakely and Simpson, 2007).

Maintaining a constant in-house environment depends largely on proper management of the ventilation system. Most houses today have the technology tools (controllers and safety backups) to overcome large fluctuations in daily temperatures in spring and fall. However, growers must program and manage the controller correctly and adjust backup settings daily; which will allow the house to transition smoothly through large outside temperature fluctuations. Failure to do so may likely impair flock performance, resulting in reduced financial returns.

When dealing with changing spring and fall weather conditions, growers may face a minimum ventilation situation during cooler, nighttime hours where ammonia buildup may be a concern, but 12 hours later there may be a need for summer cooling mode. Such wide variations in conditions make house management challenging, but spring and fall are also some of the best chicken growing weather that we have. If we can maintain the proper house environment during these times, spring and fall offer the potential for maximum performance at minimum costs (Donald et al., 1999).

FOCUS ON BIRD COMFORT

Even though spring and fall bring wide fluctuations in outside temperatures, the comfort range of broilers is very narrow (only a few degrees). This is why a controller SLOWLY ramps house temperature down a little at a time each day as the flock ages (half a degree today; maybe a full degree tomorrow). Avoiding large changes in house temperature is important to bird health, comfort, and performance. Birds will divert feed energy from growth to maintenance if they are unhappy with house temperature. Birds use feed energy to stay warm if they are cold (reducing growth and increasing feed conversion ratio), and for evaporative respiration (panting), to assist with cooling, if they are hot. Panting is work for the bird and increases the maintenance energy requirement, thus reducing the feed energy available for growth. If you accidentally program in settings that are 5°F cooler than recommended, this will likely have negative consequences in terms of bird health, feed conversion ratio, and performance. Make sure you have your integrator’s recommended program installed correctly into your controller. If in doubt, ask your service technician to check your programming setup.

The controller and ventilation system maintains required house conditions through use of set points, brooders, fans, vent doors, tunnel inlets, etc. Improper ventilation (too little or too much) has detrimental consequences. Ventilating too little may result in poor air quality (higher ammonia, carbon dioxide, and humidity) along with wet litter conditions; leading to health, welfare, and performance issues. Ventilating too much may cause drafty conditions and dusty litter; not to mention excessive fuel bills. It’s important to realize that the temperature the bird “feels” is more important than actual air temperature. This is especially true for younger birds. Air moving directly over birds creates a wind-chill effect; this is what makes tunnel ventilation so effective with older birds during hot weather. However, too much wind-chill (especially on younger birds) can cause stress and discomfort (Donald, 1999).

Continuing to run in tunnel mode during the spring and fall when nighttime temperatures usually drop below 80°F may prove detrimental for younger birds. Exercise caution when running tunnel ventilation on younger birds, especially with cooler temperatures. Generally, cooler air has a greater wind-chill effect than warmer air. That’s why it is important to utilize minimum or transitional ventilation as long as possible before switching to tunnel mode. Tunnel ventilation works great for older birds in hot weather when maximum cooling and air movement is required. However, for much of the transitional weather common to spring and fall when maximum air flow is not needed, minimum or transitional ventilation may likely be a better alternative.

- The purpose of minimum ventilation is to bring in just enough fresh air to exhaust excess moisture and ammonia in cold weather or during brooding.
- All minimum ventilation setups bring outside air in high up in the house to avoid putting cold air directly on the birds.
- To get the air flow pattern needed in minimum ventilation, the number of air inlets must be matched to the fan capacity.
- Using cool-weather adjustable air inlets actuated by a static pressure controller gives the best minimum ventilation air flow.
- Minimum ventilation is timer-controlled, not temperature controlled.

In between minimum and tunnel ventilation is transitional ventilation that is often the workhorse stage during spring and fall weather conditions. Transitional ventilation is basically a switch from timer-driven to temperature-driven ventilation (Aviagen, 2010). Transitional ventilation utilizes static-pressure-controlled air inlets (vent doors) associated with minimum ventilation and a portion of the large exhaust fans associated with tunnel ventilation to remove heat and bring in additional cool air, without putting a draft directly on the birds. By running in transitional mode and using vent doors (while keeping the tunnel curtain closed) in combination with some of the tunnel fans, it is possible to remove as much heat as being in tunnel mode with roughly half the tunnel fans running (Donald, 1999). In addition, an added advantage
is that birds are not chilled because outside air is coming through the vent doors (high up on the sidewall or in the ceiling) and being directed upward along the ceiling instead of through tunnel inlets and directly over the birds. **Key points to transitional ventilation** include (Aviagen, 2010):

- Transitional ventilation is temperature driven, when heat removal is needed but without putting cold air directly onto birds.
- When the need for heat removal requires a higher air exchange rate than the minimum ventilation setup can handle, tunnel fans can be used to bring large amounts of air in through sidewall or ceiling inlets.
- As with minimum ventilation, the transitional ventilation inlet area should be matched to fan capacity and inlet opening adjustments made by an automatic static pressure-operated controller.

**MONITOR AMMONIA AND HUMIDITY CLOSELY AT NIGHT**

During spring and fall, ammonia build up likely won’t be an issue during the day with warmer temperatures and plenty of air flow moving through the house, but could be a concern with cooler night temperatures and the house transitions back to minimum ventilation. Bird welfare concerns, poor feed conversions, reduced bird weights, and increased respiratory problems can be issues resulting from high ammonia concentrations.

Ammonia production is difficult to predict because of the numerous factors involved (management practices during and between flocks, litter moisture, downtime between flocks, litter pH, season, age, diet composition, depth of litter, etc.). Only by closely monitoring the chicken house environment and making timely adjustments can you keep ammonia concentrations at acceptable levels. **Standard minimum ventilation settings for moisture removal only apply if ammonia levels are under control.**

Humidity levels must also be kept in check inside the house to prevent damp and caked litter or dusty air conditions. Relative humidity in the 55-65% range is best and should prevent either dustiness or caking. Humidity levels of 50% or less leads to excessive dust levels in the house while levels of 70% or greater result in caked litter. Many growers often want to reduce the ventilation rate when outside conditions are cold and damp to prevent bringing in more moisture but this is usually the wrong thing to do.

While ventilating during damp outside conditions brings in some moisture, the exhaust fans usually remove, more moisture than is brought in. Therefore, the overall result is a reduction in moisture level inside the house. Cold air cannot hold as much moisture as warm air. For example, 40° F air at 50% humidity will hold about 3 ounces of water in every 1,000 cubic feet of air. However, 90° F air at 60% humidity (typical brooding conditions) holds about 20 ounces of water per 1,000 cubic feet (Donald et al., 2009). Therefore, for every 1,000 cubic feet of air exchange at these conditions, 17 ounces of water are exhausted out, resulting in a net reduction of 17 ounces of water per 1,000 cubic feet of air exchange.

*Article references available upon request.*
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If you were a breeder grower anytime between the early 1990’s and 2010, you probably saw at least a few breeder males with very dark heads, a condition I’ll refer to as “purple heads.” This condition was very common and generally assumed to be a variation of normal. In fact, some companies used it as a management tool in the feeding program for the males.

Over the years I had noticed that the condition generally seemed to show up in a breeder flock between 35 and 40 weeks of age and would often last for the life of the flock. Sometimes, however, the condition appeared and disappeared within a house during the life of a flock. These purple head males were most obvious during the early-morning hours but were more difficult to see in the afternoon. It was not unusual to find only one house on a farm affected.

During routine visits to breeder farms I would take the opportunity to ask breeder managers, service techs, and veterinarians for their opinions about the cause of this condition. Although the answers were varied, it seemed that they were all nutritionally based. Some thought the males were getting too much feed causing them to choke. Others figured that the purple head males were the low-end males and were not getting enough to eat. (One of the purple head males weighed 17 pounds, so he obviously wasn’t on the low end!) At least one breeder manager made a very good case about feed availability in the male feeder lines. He explained that improperly primed feeder lines and sloping feeder pans affected feed availability and effectively reduced feeder space thus making it more difficult for each male to get his fair share of feed. Still others, who were focused on the thought that these were under-fed and under-weight males, explained that these purple head males were eating litter, eating manure, and/or eating eggs. I also received a comment from one manager who thought these birds were not drinking enough water. I intently listened to each of these explanations before stating my opinion that this dark color was usually indicative of low blood oxygen which could be associated with a respiratory condition, a circulatory condition, or both. But I had no evidence of either. In fact, if you could ignore the fact that the birds’ head color was so dark, they otherwise looked completely normal and showed no other clinical signs that anything was wrong.

You may ask why we would even be concerned about this condition. Well, we wondered if it may affect the performance, stamina, semen quality, fertility, and/or livability of the breeder males. If not, then the presence of these purple head males may just be a curiosity.

Although I had been curious about this condition for many years, I didn’t really begin to investigate it until August 2008 when a fourth-year veterinary student came to me wanting to work on a special project for a month. Since he had an interest in breeders, we decided to run some tests on the purple head males. Some of our early observations about this condition were: 1) it was only observed in male breeders; 2) it was not limited to one strain of male breeders; 3) it was not even limited to the male breeder lines since it was also observed in “sex-slip” males, which are brothers of the breeder hens; 4) it was observed in the male breeders of multiple broiler production companies.

One of the initial measurements we conducted on these breeder males was pulse oximetry to evaluate the oxygen saturation or level of oxygen in the blood. The early results suggested that the purple head males had lower oxygen levels than the normal-appearing males. We could even see the difference in the color of the blood pulled from the purple males compared with the normal males. However, we also determined that the purple head males can change colors to have a very normal bright red comb and wattles. This was confirmation of our suspicion that this dark coloration was transient.

In December 2008, to better evaluate these purple head males, we contacted the Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine and made an appointment with one of the radiologists. She was able to evaluate the hearts of these birds using echocardiography, basically a sonogram of the heart. From this she was able to see the heart in action and determined that many of these purple head males had a leaky heart valve otherwise known as aortic valve insufficiency. Did this cause the purple coloration that we saw in these males? That’s what we wanted to determine. Over the course of the next several months we evaluated more of these males using an echocardiograms.

In July 2009, I presented the initial findings about these purple head males at a national meeting of poultry veterinarians. Realizing that there was significant interest in this topic, we applied for a grant in 2010 to study this problem in greater detail. This grant was approved, funded, and initiated in early 2011.

By the end of 2012 we had evaluated 265 broiler breeder males for this project. We are currently in the process of analyzing the large volume of data we collected for the final report. I can say at this point that 17.4% of the males showed no indication of this heart condition while 36.6% had mild involvement and another 18.5% showed moderate to severe involvement.

One of the interesting but disappointing observations made during the course of this two-year project was the fact that the purple head males, which had been so obvious for over 15 years, became almost non-existent. Of course, this made sample collection for the project very challenging. Nevertheless, we continued to collect samples to the best of our ability. In my next newsletter article, I’ll give you the final report on this project.
By John E. Milner and Susan Floyd King – Brunini, Grantham, Grower & Hewes, PLLC

Is the ePA Making Backdoor Deals Using Sue and Settle Tactics?

Numeric nutrient criteria (NNC) standards – setting hard limits for how much nitrogen and phosphorous can be in Mississippi waters – is connected to what happens in Florida, the first state to be forced through legal tactics by environmental activist groups to develop and establish NNC standards. But what about these legal tactics, often referred to as “sue and settle” tactics, used by a growing number of environmental activist groups in an alarming number of cases to force federal agencies to settle lawsuits over regulatory policies, thereby bypassing critically important procedures in rulemaking as required under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) originally adopted by Congress in 1948? What role does EPA play in these sue and settle tactics? Are such tactics creating rules and regulations that are nearly impossible to come into compliance with? If farmers and growers are forced to comply with such rules and regulations, how will it affect future growth? And what is being done to stop sue and settle practices?

SUE AND SETTLE - DEFINED

In a typical sue and settle situation, an environmental group files suit against EPA, usually under the citizen suit (a citizen suit allows a private citizen to sue any person, including the government, for violating environmental laws) provisions of a federal law, like the Clean Air Act (CAA) or the Clean Water Act (CWA). Such suits typically allege that the agency has missed a deadline for issuing a rule or has not properly administered a regulation. Rather than defend the suits, EPA enters into settlement negotiations and proposes to take action based upon the groups’ demands. Consequently, the resulting consent decrees often serve the narrow goals of environmental groups without regard for the interests of the public and the regulated community.

The deals reached by the EPA and the environmental groups often include arbitrary deadlines that offer no meaningful opportunity to present competing viewpoints on substantive issues. The court may approve and enter the settlement reached with little discussion. Then when EPA implements the new requirements required by the settlement and opposition is raised, the EPA argues that it is compelled by court order to implement the new requirements under the terms of the court decree. If a citizen or company wishes to challenge these new requirements, it must clear the high hurdle of arbitrary and capricious review, which is a legal standard that affords considerable deference to EPA decision-making.

SUE AND SETTLE – THE DOLLAR AMOUNT

According to a 2011 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, millions of taxpayers’ dollars were awarded to environmental organizations for EPA litigations between 1995 and 2010. Most of this was paid to environmental attorneys in connection with lawsuits filed under the CAA, followed next by the CWA. Attorneys’ fees can be paid for out of the Equal Access to Justice Act and the Treasury Department’s Judgment Fund, both of which are set up in such a way that information on whom and how much money is paid in any settlement is undisclosed. In addition, the Department of Justice spent approximately $43 million defending EPA in court between 1998 and 2010.

A recent Chamber of Commerce report concluded that sue and settle practices are responsible for many of the EPA’s “most controversial, economically significant regulations that have plagued the business community for the past few years.” Essentially, such settlements reached by EPA and the environmental groups affect refineries, power plants, cement plants, mining operations, chemical manufacturers and agriculture. For example, a current case against EPA for failing to adequately consult with other agencies regarding the effects of nearly 300 EPA-registered pesticides on more than 200 endangered and threatened species nationwide could potentially impact 112 million acres of farmland across the country.

SUE AND SETTLE – CONGRESS REACTS

The costs of these sue and settle practices are not the only concern. There is also concern that although stakeholders may have input in the subsequent rulemaking following these settlements, the effectiveness of such input may be limited because certain results are prescribed by the voluntary settlement or because the agreed schedule effectively limits meaningful input and consideration. Such concerns were discussed before the Oversight and Government Reform Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives on June 28, 2012. The Committee considered the following issues that persist under the sue and settle practices: (1) the opportunities for environmental groups to steer the objectives of governmental agencies; (2) the lack of transparency; (3) the lack of meaningful public participation; and (4) the lack of judicial review.

On June 27, 2013, the House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton (R-Mich.), with Reps. Tim Murphy (R-Pa.) and Ed Whitfield (R-Ky.), called for an investigation into the EPA’s alleged “sue and settle tactics” and requested that the GAO launch a probe into the practice. In a letter to the GAO, the three expressed concern that “in many instances, EPA has entered into settlements or consent decrees committing the agency to undertake significant rulemaking subject to specific timelines or schedules, including rulemaking that may result in substantial new compliance costs.” In July 2013, a bill intended to bring more transparency into lawsuits brought against federal regulators by outside interest groups advanced to the House of Representatives. In short, Congress is just beginning to peel back the curtain on sue and settle practices with federal agencies.

SUE AND SETTLE – STATES REACT

State attorneys general have also criticized sue and settle practices and urged EPA to comply with regulatory procedural
requirements when faced with litigation threats from other states and environmental groups. In a June 2013 letter to then acting EPA Administrator Bob Perciasepe, 21 states took the position that “appropriate process should not be subjugated, and effective policymaking cannot be forced to fruition, by threatening litigation.”

In further action, twelve states (Oklahoma, Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming) filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma in July 2013 to challenge EPA’s denial of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for records related to EPA’s negotiations with environmental groups which evolved into settlements and consent decrees. (Pruitt v. EPA, number 5:13-cv-00726) Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt explained the suit was necessary because “if the EPA is making backdoor deals with environmental groups to push their agenda on the American people while bypassing the states and Congress, we need to know.”

CONCLUSION

According to a report issued June 26 by the American Legislative Exchange Council, EPA has participated in approximately 48 sue and settle agreements since 2010. Now is the time for transparency. If EPA believes that these types of settlements served the interest of the public, release of such information should be easily forthcoming. However, since the EPA’s inspector general recently announced on July 23 an investigation into how the EPA decides what information to release under FOIA requests, those in the regulated community should not hold their breath.

Brunini’s Environmental Group is “one of the premier practices in the state” and represents major manufacturers and private industry clients.

Brunini has considerable expertise in environmental litigation, regulatory permitting and compliance issues as well as due diligence and transactional matters. Chambers USA: Leading Lawyers has ranked Brunini as a Level One Environmental Law Firm.

John Milner serves as counsel to the Mississippi Poultry Association. John Brunini, Gene Wasson and Susan King round out this leading Environmental Law Group.
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At Mississippi State University, we’re off to another exciting, energetic fall semester!

In Poultry Science, we have a record number of new undergrad students – freshmen and transfers – with totals right around 50. Graduate student numbers are up as well, with 12 (three PhD, nine MS) enrolled.

The Poultry Science Club is actively planning a number of events for this fall under the leadership of their newly elected officers (Cole Rogers, President; Erica Rigney, VP; Dana Dittoe, Secretary; and Lynford Seibel, Treasurer). The student kitchen at the Poultry Farm has been refurbished, so chicken cookings and caterings are planned for a number of events, including for MPA and the MSU Retirees Dinner in October. Chicken plates will be sold at home football games and provided for alumni at Homecoming.

Club members will also participate in two interesting and important outreach/recruiting events this fall. The first is a challenge from the Animal Ag Alliance to colleges and universities around the country to become ambassadors for agriculture – dispelling myths and providing science-based education about animal ag – on their campuses and in their communities. The program is College Aggies Online (not related to Texas A&M!) and the competition consists of a series of outreach events and activities for which the club and also individuals receive points. At the end of the academic year, the top clubs and individuals receive prizes and recognition. More importantly, as our Poultry Science Club President noted, “It’s not about the money but about the benefit to poultry science and agriculture.”

The other outreach event is participation in a conference at Texas A&M on October 4-6, entitled, “Farmers Fight.” This is a student-led initiative designed to increase students’ awareness of anti-agriculture forces and to teach techniques and strategies for effective and productive counter-messages. MSU, with support from the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, will send four students to this conference – two from Poultry Science and two from Animal Science; Dr. Morgan Farnell will attend as the faculty representative.

Our poultry research, teaching, and Extension farm has been undergoing a major facelift. The foam disinfecting and depopulation trailers are here from Texas A&M and Dr. Farnell has already used them in several demonstrations, with several more scheduled. The in-line composter, courtesy of Tri-Foam Poly from Canada, has been installed and will be in production soon under Dr. Tabler’s direction. We anticipate that this technology, which we will share with producers in Mississippi, will offer a viable alternative to incineration. Plans are being drawn up for a sorely-needed feed mill overhaul to allow us to figure out how and when we can manage to get this accomplished. Further out, but also a critical need, is a BSL-2 bird facility where pathogen challenges can be studied under safe conditions.

The research activity level at the Farm and in Hill Poultry Science is very high. We have a record number of student workers assisting the faculty, staff, and farm crew. Also, in addition to Dr. Yakout, our visiting scientist from Egypt, we have Dr. Anfang Liu from the Southwest University, Rongchang Campus, China, as a visiting scientist for this academic year.

We appreciate all of the support and encouragement from our industry partners in Mississippi and look forward to seeing you in Starkville this fall for Homecoming.

By Dr. Mary Beck
Poultry Science Department Head
Mississippi State University

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MS Poultry Association Fall Seminars

OCTOBER 1 • 2:30–7:00 p.m. • Dinner Included
Pearl River Community College (Hattiesburg campus)
906 Sullivan Drive, Hattiesburg, MS 39401

OCTOBER 2 • 2:30–7:00 p.m. • Dinner Included
Simpson County Extension Office (Mendenhall)
2785 Simpson Highway 49, Mendenhall, MS 39114

OCTOBER 3 • 2:30–7:00 p.m. • Dinner Included
Senior Citizens Community Center (Philadelphia)
Burt Drive, Philadelphia, MS 39350

Topics and Speakers:
• Winter Time Chicken House Ventilation – Dr. Jody Purswell (USDA-ARS)
• Drinker Line Sanitation – Dr. Susan Watkins (University of Arkansas)
• Paw Scores and Broiler Mobility – Dr. Tom Tabler (MSU)
• Mortality Options – Dr. Jeremiah Davis (MSU)
• Litter Treatment, Dr. Pat Welch
• Nutrient Management Plans – USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service

Please RSVP to bill@mspoultry.org or call 601-932-7560 to let us know which location you plan to attend.

If you want to join the Mississippi Poultry Association as a Grower Member, call the MPA office at (601) 932-7560 for more information!